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The University of Southern Mississippi

HIGH-STAKES TESTING AND ITS RELATIONSHIP  
TO STRESS LEVELS OF COASTAL  
SECONDARY TEACHERS

by

Sheneatha Lashelle Alexander McDaniel

Abstract of a Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School  
of The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2012

ABSTRACT

HIGH-STAKES TESTING AND ITS RELATIONSHIP  
TO STRESS LEVELS OF COASTAL  
SECONDARY TEACHERS

by Sheneatha LaShelle Alexander McDaniel

May 2012

The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between high-stakes tests and stress with secondary teachers. Furthermore, this study investigated whether veteran teachers experience more stress than novice teachers and whether or not self-efficacy, gender, accountability status, and years of experience influence teacher stress as it relates to high-stakes testing. This contributed to the existing literature that relates to teacher stress and high-stakes testing.

The participants for the study included Mississippi public coastal secondary school teachers who have administered the Mississippi Subject Area Testing Program system. The districts chosen were all secondary coastal schools. There was a significant difference,  $t(102)=2.169, p=.032$ , between the stress level of female teachers and the stress levels of male teachers. This significance is due to the limited number of male teachers who responded to the survey. Of the teachers who responded to the survey, 25% ( $N=104$ ) were males. Thus, the 75% female respondents posed significance difference in gender and its affects to the stress levels of teachers as it relates to high-stakes testing in the stress levels of teachers. Furthermore, the there was a significant difference,  $F(2,101)=5.623, p=.005$ , in the stress levels of teachers based the school's performance level as it relates to high-stakes testing. The performance level of school does

significantly affect the stress level of teachers as it relates to high-stakes testing. Schools with a high-performing rating had 45.2% of the teacher respondents. There were no respondents from schools that had a rating that was below successful.

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A Dissertation  
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Approved:

Dr. Rose M. McNeese  
Director

Dr. J. T. Johnson

Dr. David Lee

Dr. Ronald Styron

Susan A. Siltanen  
Dean of the Graduate School

May 2012

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Assessment is changing significantly under influence forces that are social and technical. Most of the states in the United States were geared towards standard based assessment. Performing on higher standards for all students was a major component for educational reform. These higher standards were measured on large scales assessment systems that have formally excluded students with disabilities. Thus, the comprehensiveness of education reform across the United States with the existing standards-based reform was a direct result of the publication of a Nation at Risk and the passage of Goals 2000: Educate America Act (Johnson, 2000).

According to Baxter & Elder (1996), assessments should be used to demonstrate a student's ability to apply multiple problem solving strategies. Performance assessment is a type of testing and a process that calls for students to actively participate in learning while being assessed. Performance assessments were designed to judge the student's ability to use specific knowledge and research skills. Most performance assessments required the student to manipulate equipment to solve a problem or make an analysis. Rich performance assessments revealed a variety of problem-solving approaches, and it provided insight into a student's level of conceptual procedural knowledge (Baxter & Elder, 1996).

The purpose of performance assessment is to determine what students are able to do with the knowledge of the context. It evaluates the process of how the student actually does whatever is required. For example, in math or science, performance assessment examines the student's actual application of knowledge to solve problems.

Although in some cases, the solution to a problem may require students to apply a specific procedure learned in class, other cases may require a combination of procedures or prior knowledge learned before the course. Factual knowledge is not typically measured by performance assessments. It is a combination of alternative assessment and authentic assessment. Within performance assessments, there are distinctions. Some assessments are geared towards the context having meaning, while others have meaning and context of the real world. The alternative type testing is the traditional paper and pencil testing. With authentic assessment, the context is academically meaningful.

According to Fuchs et al. (2005), the development of effective intervention programs in reading, writing, and math focused on the basics and challenging assessments that promoted learning and fluency. Intervention programs for students with disabilities transitioned from the traditional learning methods that measured and assessed learning. Major forces that influenced assessment included: accountability, the pressure of authentic assessment, support of computer testing, and emphasis of the consequences so assessment. With No Child Left Behind and high stakes testing being the center focus of education, teachers and students are faced with accountability issues. Teachers have to teach to a set of standards that is set by the state and students have to perform to those set of standards. Teachers across the states are pushed to teach content and students are expected to perform with proficiency on the content taught.

Accountability and standardized testing results have been used to improve schools nationwide. States moved towards an era that used accreditation systems to assist school districts in self-improvement plans that were used to monitor school accountability

(Rothstein, Jacobsen, & Wilder 2009). Standardized achievement tests have been used to monitor progress of students for over a century. The National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP) uses standardized testing to monitor and compare student progress across states. There are many underlying questions and issues that were associated with high-stakes testing. According to Rothstein (2009), “The United States is not the only nation that wants methods to hold schools accountable. Several other nations took a step beyond test scores and developed school inspection regimes to determine if student performance is satisfactory” (p. 628).

Accountability and testing received extensive funding and support as an approach to improving education. According to McAndrews (2009), the Bush administration gave schools three years to improve test scores. Financial aid was annually distributive to schools to help improve test scores in math and reading. Laws gave schools funds for tutorial services that would help to improve test scores. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) gave parents the options of transferring their children from a low performing or failing school to other public schools. The federal government could require states to improve sanctions on schools that were considered failing (McAndrews, 2009).

However, according to Nichols, Glass, & Berliner (2006), there was no consistent evidence that high-stakes testing worked to increase achievement. Well-designed and valid assessments that were related to the theory of B.F. Skinner measured behavior change immediately after a learning event (Nichols, Glass, & Berliner, 2006). The United States Department of Education designed valid assessments known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress, (NAEP), which measured what students know and can do and (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

According to Mathis (2004), the No Child Left Behind Act promised impartiality to all children and claimed significant increases in financial support. No Child Left Behind focused on improving student achievement in the nation's highest poverty school (U.S. Department of Education, 2010b). According to Sterbinsky, Ross, & Redfield (2006), the impacts of comprehensive school reform was modeled in diverse geographical locations. Comprehensive school reforms encompassed instruction, assessment, professional development, parental involvement, curriculum, and many other aspects that determined the functionality of a school and achievement gaps (Sterbinsky, Ross, & Redfield, 2006).

As stated by the NAEP (U.S. Department of Education, 2011), "Achievement gaps occur when one group of students outperforms another group and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant" (para. 1). The achievement gap that exists occurs across demographic and socio-economic groups. The U.S. Department of Education uses NAEP to monitor student achievement on high-stakes tests within demographic and socio-economic groups of students. According to Heubert (2009), standard based school reform used high- stakes tests to identify students who were not high achievers, and students who would benefit from school reform. Schools, teachers, and students were held to high standards of teaching and learning, with standard based reform (Heubert, 2009).

The gap in achievement could be minimized by aligning instruction, curriculum, classroom test, and school wide test with state standards. According to McAndrews (2009), accountability and assessment of NCLB raised standards for schools and their teachers. States were required to make sure all teachers were highly qualified to teach at

least one subject. The requirements made by states caused districts and principals to become more selective in their hiring practices for teachers in efforts to increase student performance (McAndrews, 2009).

Although there are various differences in student performance and accountability systems among each state's understanding of accountability, there are various differences among local school's interpretation of the model. An educational mandate of the accountability systems requires each state to create and model academic standards. These academic standards explain, in detail, what each individual student should know and learn in a specific time frame. Yearly statewide test are administered to each student to measure academic achievement. Annual school results are reported and posted under NCLB. Each state is required to set goals that measure achievement for all public and district schools. The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report categorizes the results by states, districts, and schools. The National Center for Educational Statistics has mapped the performance of each state's standards in mathematics and reading. The NAEP used a common scale to compare each state's standards. State mapping is used to analyze where each state is located on the NAEP scale of performance in mathematics and reading.

According to NAEP (2011):

The state mapping studies performed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) offer several important contributions to national education analyses. First, the mapping analyses allow each state to compare the stringency of its criteria for proficiency with that of other states. Second, they inform a state whether the rigor of its standards, as represented by the NAEP scale equivalent of the state's standard, changed over time. Significant differences in NAEP scale

equivalents might reflect changes in state assessments and standards or changes in policies or practices that occurred between the years. Finally, when key aspects of a state's assessment or standards remain the same, these mapping analyses allow NAEP to corroborate state-reported changes in student achievement. (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, para. 1)

The analyses reports are used to help states develop and revise educational standards for schools.

New federal laws are requiring states to re-evaluate and modify their plans for individual state accountability. Some states are showing growth and are meeting AYP, however, not all states have decent results. In the state of Illinois, the U. S. Department of Education approved its plan that was developed by a committee of parents, educators, and community leaders (Illinois State Board of Education, 2010). According to Shaw (2010), "York City School District was viewed as having its glass half-empty, based on the recent state test results. The district and all but one of its schools failed to make adequate yearly progress toward 2010 state standards on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment, based on final scores" (Shaw, 2010, para. 1).

According to Kruger, Wandle, & Struzziero (2007), the core of education, with a focus on student, caused teachers to experience pressure with mandates of high-stakes testing. The implications of high-stakes testing have place pressure of the educational system of many states. Schools, teachers, and students are pressured to achieve at high levels with high-stakes testing (Kruger, Wandle, & Struzziero, 2007). The U.S. Department of Education (2010a) reported, "teachers' concerns run a wide gamut, ranging from the need for assessment that engages multiple intelligences to frustration



around the stress that high-stakes testing can create for many students” (US Department of Education, 2010a, para. 1). With the age of accountability and assessment, states are researching ways to motivate teachers to modify instructions that will increase academic performance. The terms academic performance and high-stakes testing have become common for teachers nationwide. Along with high-stakes testing, comes the increased level of stress for teachers.

According to Stuart Yeh, (2006), teachers expressed that stress would be relieved if students could be tested on what they learned once the objective was complete, rather than students waiting until the end of the year to take the comprehensive test. As high-stakes testing prompts states to move toward the present trend in education, research found that teachers felt high levels of stress while preparing students for tests. The pressure and stress that teachers experience, with the revisions in education and high-stakes testing, has lead teachers to pursue other careers causing teacher shortages (Yeh, 2005).

According to Crocco and Costigan (2006), high-stakes testing caused urban city schools to employ culture of high-stakes teaching. The need to employ teachers who are qualified to teach high-stakes testing causes urban city schools, in particular, to deal with issues such as teacher shortages and increased student enrollment. The issues of increased enrollment and teachers shortages can make teaching stressful (Crocco & Costigan, 2006).

According to Rieg, Paquette, & Chen (2007), the second most stress factor that was identified by teachers was the pressure that they felt as it relates to high-stakes testing. Teachers felt pressure to do better than other schools and districts. The task to

show that students showed growth each year was challenging for some teachers, which caused stress for some of the teachers. Teachers also felt the pressure of teaching students so that they could perform better than the students performed in previous years. These added pressures increased the anxiety of teachers, particularly novice teachers (Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2007).

Teachers also expressed that students' performance was felt to be a direct reflection of teaching practices. Along with the stress of student performance, teachers experienced stress in preparing and administering the high-stakes tests. Research showed that the teaching profession is highly stressed, but there are other stressors that make teaching a highly stressful profession. Teachers also expressed that students' performance was felt to be a direct reflection of teaching practices. Along with the stress of student performance, teachers experienced stress when preparing and administering the high-stakes tests (Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2007).

According to Merozek (2002), teacher shortage and increased student enrollment made teaching stressful. In middle and high school level courses, typically high-stakes tested math and science courses, teachers experienced little change in class size (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010). Teachers experienced high levels of stress in various areas as it related to teaching and testing. Some of them included:

1. Conflict between the amount of time to teach and follow the curriculum
2. Multiple teachers' roles: teacher, mother/father, coach, counselor and others.
3. Heavy workloads give teachers no time to relax within a day
4. Teachers bring work home daily – no time to finish at work
5. And High-Stakes Assessment Testing (Merozek, 2002, p.4).

As stated by the U.S. Department of Education (2011), accountability had increased the rigor in classroom across the nation. Since the 1970s, assessments had been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U. S. history, civics, geography, and the arts. National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP) provided student results from periodic assessment in math, reading, science, and other subjects (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). States are seeking diverse and effective ways of improving test scores as it relates to student achievement and graduation rates. Teachers are faced with modifying their lessons to ensure that learning is meaningful and the lessons are used for increasing the educational standards in schools. Mandates of No Child Left Behind are prompting states to research ways to motivate and increase academic performance to ensure that schools and districts meet or exceed goals that are set to show AYP. High-stakes testing has become a common language for teachers nationwide. Along with high-stakes testing, comes the increased level of stress for teachers.

According to Intrator (2006), it was believed that teachers must be prepared to teach. It was said that teachers should have a deep understanding of the subject area they are expected to teach. Many challenges must be met by novice teachers, including how to manage stress that is caused by the job of teaching (Intrator, 2006). Highly qualified teachers are in demand particularly in the areas of math and science. Teachers who are teaching tested and non-tested courses that are used to determine whether or not school districts meet AYP parallel the validating qualifications of teachers through state licensure. The current trend in education, high-stakes testing, has prompted states to move toward improving teacher education programs. According to Bain and Mirel

(2006), novice teachers who were just of education needed to know how to provide engaging instruction that within the high-stakes testing content, acquire content knowledge that facilitated teaching the subject to students of diverse backgrounds and cultures. The high demands of increasing test scores placed strain on novice and veteran teachers. Research showed that teachers felt high levels of stress while preparing students for tests. The level of stress that female teachers experienced was related to job stress (Bain and Mirel, 2006). Females, in particular, exhibited job stress that is associated with workload stress and classroom, (Timms, Graham, & Caltabiano, 2006). Self-efficacy linked job satisfaction to job stress (Klassen & Chiu, 2010).

The No Child Left Behind Act, Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA), and Amendments of 1997, focused on increasing and improving outcomes for students with disabilities. The focused attention in all settings placed increased stress on novice teachers (Boyer, 2005). Novice special educators experienced stressful challenges in ensuring that their teaching practices are meaningful and effective (Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler 2005). Novice teachers' stressful experiences included: determining individual accommodations for students, developing self-assurance and understanding with supervision of paraprofessionals, supporting students who are in general education classrooms, performing and organizing difficult medical procedures, understanding the legal aspect of services provided to students, and creating effective learning experiences for students with special needs (Boyer, 2005).

Although accountability and testing was the educational era for states, schools and teachers, high-stakes testing impacted teachers in several ways. Teachers felt more stress with modifying lessons that would increase learning and academic achievement for

students and preparing students for high-stakes test. Teachers experienced pressure with the mandates of high-stakes testing. The pressures that teachers experienced were identified as the norm for teachers (Boyer, 2005).

Along with accountability and testing was the added factor of stress. It was reported that teacher stress had a phenomenal impact on teachers and the well-being of individual teachers (Gold, Smith, Hopper, Herne, Tansey, & Hulland, 2010).

#### Statement of the Problem

Accountability and testing has been used to monitor and assess the educational progress of schools in the nation. State schools and teachers have been impacted by mandates of high-stakes testing that have been a cause for some levels of stress that teachers have experienced. According to Boyer (2005), it is normal for teachers to experience stress caused by the pressures of high-stakes tests. However, teachers in secondary schools who teach high-stakes tested area courses presents a potential issue of stress with accountability and assessment in education. Glazing over the issue of stress being associated with high-stakes testing for teachers in secondary schools, potentially pose a greater issue for education. Teachers abandoning the profession, with high-stakes testing being the forefront of education and accountability, could pose detrimental issues for educators and education. The benefits of addressing stress as it is associated with high-stakes testing could provide educators, administrators, and school leaders with resources, support systems, and positive incentives with managing stress while teaching high-stakes tested courses.

The Mississippi Department of Education has required students to pass the subject area test(s) as a requirement for graduation since the 2001-2002 academic school year as

a part of the No Child Left Behind and Title I requirements. Teachers are accountable for preparing students who will be assessed on the content upon the completion of course in four content areas. The content areas courses are Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and U. S. History. English II is administered in two parts: multiple choice only and a writing prompt. The test development process includes an advisory committee that consisted of Mississippi teachers. Teachers are responsible for teaching students how to perform on high-stakes test that will demonstrate mastery of the described performance at that course level.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate and examine the relationship between stress and high-stakes test mandates for secondary teachers. Furthermore, this study examined whether veteran teachers experience more stress than novice teachers; and whether or not self-efficacy, gender, accountability status, and years of experience influenced teacher stress as it relates to high-stakes testing. This study explored the stress levels of secondary teachers who teach courses that require students to take an end-of-course standardized state test to determine if self-efficacy affects the stress levels of teachers who teach high-stakes test subjects. This study also explored the stress levels of teachers who teach and do not teach end-of-course tested classes as it relates to gender.

The study provided information and knowledge for school administrators that can be used to help teachers reduce the level of stress experienced with high-stakes testing. Administrators can use the knowledge to increase resources that can be used to improve school climate and assist in planning professional development programs and workshops for teachers. Teachers can gain knowledge on how to reduce stress while teaching

courses that are high-stakes tested. Teachers can easily identify some stressors and how to manage stress created by the stressors. The decrease in teacher stress levels can increase high-stakes test scores, increase teacher retention, and decrease class sizes. Minimizing the focus on testing and maximizing teaching and learning can increase student achievement.

This study served as an awareness of the manifestation of the level of stress associated with high-stakes testing in achieving AYP goals for secondary schools and schools displaying growth on standardized test in the Mississippi Gulf coastal area. This study also provided awareness to administrators on how to help reduce stress for staff and increase retention in the teaching profession. It provided knowledge on the perception of teachers of high-stakes testing as it relates to self-efficacy.

#### Research Questions and Null Hypothesis

This study will be guided by the following research questions that were measured from the use of research survey in the form of a questionnaire:

1. Do teachers who teach high-stakes testing courses in secondary schools have more stress than teachers who do not teach high-stakes testing course in secondary schools?
2. Does self-efficacy affect the stress level teachers who teach high-stakes testing courses more than teachers who do not teach high-stakes testing courses?
3. Does the performance level of a school affect the stress level of teachers as it relates to high-stakes testing?
4. Does the number of years of experience affect the stress levels of secondary teachers as it relates to high-stakes testing?

5. Does gender affect the stress levels of secondary teachers as it relates to high-stakes testing?

This study tested the following hypothesis:

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the stress level of teachers who teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools and the stress level of teachers who do not teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the self-efficacy of teachers who teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools and the self-efficacy of teachers who do not teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools.

HO<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant difference in the stress levels of secondary teachers based on the performance level of their school.

HO<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant difference between the stress levels of veteran teachers in secondary schools and the stress levels of novice teachers in secondary schools as it relates to high-stakes testing.

HO<sub>5</sub>: There is a significant difference between the stress levels of female teachers who teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools and the stress levels of male teacher who teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools.

### Rationale of the Study

The belief that leadership practices is related to teacher stress, school morale, and student achievement is a phenomenon that intrigues educators. Educators and school leaders continuously evaluate effective leadership practices of principals as it relates to student achievement and school morale. However, teacher stress has not been a priority of school leadership practices as it relates to student achievement and high-stakes tests.



According to Roby (2009), the most frequent factors that affected teachers' contributions were apathy, moral, lack of purpose, and isolation from colleagues which leads to job stress of teachers. Reducing the negative perception of school leadership begins with identifying effective leadership practices of principals on teacher attrition. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the need for teachers to feel supported must be satisfied before increase student achievement and teacher self-efficacy can be apparent.

Student performance and accountability systems substantiate the local interpretation of accountability mandates across states. Accountability systems and educational mandates require each state to develop standards and goals for increasing and/or improving student achievement. Each state administers state assessment that determines grade promotion, graduation, and academic achievement. Accountability is monitored by AYP reports that categorize the student's results by district, school, and subgroups. In the state of Mississippi, teachers are held accountable for preparing students who assessed on the content upon completing Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and U. S. History courses. Graduation rates and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations are linked to Algebra I and English II scores that must comply with federal laws. School Districts are monitoring and realigning state standards and test to meet the new standards set by NAEP. These new standards will be listed in the common core standards. The continuous monitoring and realigning of state curriculum lead teachers to modify instructions that will increase student learning and academic achievement. The continuous modification of instructions strains teachers who teach in high-stakes tested courses. Some believe that the association of self-efficacy, job stress, and teacher stress is partly caused by high-stakes tests.

Periodic assessments have been conducted in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and the arts since the 1960s (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Standards for state assessments have been in practice to ensure that schools reach federal standards mandates of NCLB (Longo, 2010). States were directed by the United States Department of Education to modify educational programs that would increase accountability in schools.

### Delimitations

Delimitations for the study included the number of participants needed for the study may be limited to a small geographical location and number of school. The participants for this study are coastal teachers limiting the number of respondents. Coastal schools are a small sample size of the schools in Mississippi. The sample size limits the number of school respondents based on school performance level and the number of respondents need for survey completion.

### Definition of Terms

*Achievement Gap*- The difference between how well low socio economic students and minority students perform on standardized test compared to their peers. “Occurring when one group of students outperforms another group and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant” (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

*Accountability*- The state’s way to insure that schools are performing academically and students are achieving based on the state standards..

*Accountability system-* Each state sets standards for what all students should know and learn. Student achievement is measured for each child, annually. The results of these yearly tests are reported to the public.

*Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)-* under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act 2010. All states are required to set goals for all students to meet or exceed standards in reading and mathematics by 2014. Adequate yearly progress measures the achievement of states, districts, and schools, academic performance, graduation rate, the state assessment systems MCTII and SATP.

*High-stakes testing-* state and/or federally mandated testing and/or assessment use for determining whether or not a student graduates from high school, schools receive funding, and evaluating school and district progress. In the state of Mississippi, algebra, history, English, and biology are the cause for high dropout rates (Sheriberg & Sheriberg, 2006).

*Job Stress-* job related factors that cause harmful physical and emotional change in workers.

*NAEP-* the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the Nation's Report Card, is a national assessment of what students know and can do in various subject areas.

*No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001-* Requires states, districts, and schools to report accountability reports. The education policy of the federal government mandates high-stakes testing for student achievement (Schlesinger, 2010).

*Novice Teacher-* As defined for this study, teachers with less than 6 years of teaching experience.

*Standardized Achievement Test-* the subject area testing program used by the Mississippi Department of Education high-stakes on State Testing system.

*Stress-* emotional and physical strain, high-stakes causing change in the physical and mental behavior.

*Self Efficacy-* a person's belief about his or her own capabilities of producing a desired result in performance. It determines a person's cognitive thinking, feelings, and self-motivation (Bandura, 1998).

*Subject Area Testing Program (SATP)-* it is the Mississippi Department of Education State Testing system that consists of four academic end-of-course tests. Students are assessed on the knowledge and content of Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and U.S. History from 1877 upon the completion of the course. All students who are enrolled in Algebra I and English II for the first time must take a multiple choice test, as a requirement of NCLB and Title I. The annual report cards and AYP includes the results of all first time test takers with federal law compliance.

*Teacher Stress-* work related physical, emotional, and intellectual stress caused by the description of the profession.

*Veteran Teacher-* for the purpose of this study, teachers with more than 5 years of teaching experience.

### Assumptions

It is an assumption of the researcher that all participants responded in a timely manner, all participants have understood the survey questions and answer all of the questions honestly, a represented sample of each school based on performance level has responded honestly on the questionnaire, all superintendents have responded with

permission for schools to complete the surveys, and all building principals complied with superintendents, and allowed staff to complete the questionnaires.

### Justification

This research projected supplements the existing data and literature on high-Stakes testing has been used as an approach to measuring student achievement and accountability systems in education. Educators across the nations are transitioning towards improving and closely monitoring educational standards that are used to improve and increase student achievement on standardized tests. Although states are more openly addressing issues with educational systems and accountability, the level of stress that teachers who are held responsible for teaching students in high-stakes tested areas is not a priority for many schools.

Additionally, the investigation of the relationship between stress and high-stakes test mandates for secondary teachers provided educators with a different perspective on high-stakes testing mandates. More at handedly, veteran teachers, novice teacher, male teachers, female teachers, teachers with little experience, and teachers with much experience all have a commonality of stress as it relates to high-stakes testing. Thus, self-efficacy, gender, accountability status, and years of experience influence teacher stress as it relates to high-stakes testing. According to Ledoux and McHenry (2008), the stress of teachers to help students excel on high-stakes tests in low performing schools has created an educational drawback for veteran teachers. This chapter imminently details the methodology for the research design, population, instrument, procedures, and data analysis.

## Summary

Accountability and assessment has historically shadowed education with high-stakes testing setting the standard for education. The literature that will be discussed in chapter two will support the incline of high-stakes testing leading the way for education reform and support the relationship of teachers stress and high-stakes testing. The current chapter presents an introduction to the study and provides an overview of the literature, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, rationale for the study, delimitation, assumptions, definitions, and justification for the study. Additionally, Chapter III will explain the methodology for which the study was conducted. Chapter IV will analyze and summarize the data, and Chapter V concludes and summarizes the results of the study.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Accountability and testing has placed pressure on teachers to improve student achievement. The continuous requirement to increase student achievement has placed great measures of strain and stress on teachers, particularly those teachers who are responsible for high-stakes tests. Accountability and testing has placed pressure on teachers to improve student achievement. The continuous requirement to increase student achievement has placed great measures of strain and stress on teachers, particularly those teachers who are responsible for high-stakes tests.

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Accountability and testing has placed pressure on teachers to improve student achievement. The continuous requirement to increase student achievement has placed great measures of strain and stress on teachers, particularly those teachers who are responsible for high-stakes tests. Within the context of education reform, American education is known for the implementing changes within its schools for the purpose of increasing student achievement. However, without fully exploring the effectiveness of the changes, American education will not be able to determine the impact of the changes on student learning and achievement. Since the National Commission on Excellence in Education published its reports, *A Nation at Risk*, Americans have questioned our

educational effectiveness (Lawrence & McPherson, 2000). According to Walter (2004), the educational reform impacted educational systems for years. Billions of NCLB dollars had been increasingly used to fund Title I programs and reading programs. Federal funds have been allocated for recruiting and retaining teachers and principals. States will begin using strategies for developing curriculum and statewide test that will insure that students will meet the standards. Where states have been traditionally in control of setting its own standards, states are now being mandated meet higher standards that were set by the United States Department of Education.

According to Vogler (2008), Mississippi teachers spent more time preparing students for high-stakes test that determined whether or not students graduate from high school. It was reported that 83.6% of the respondents surveyed spent more instructional time preparing students for high-stakes graduation examinations. Respondents spent more helping students achieve and improve state accountability examination scores. Compared to Tennessee, Mississippi's teachers placed more importance on the format and results of the state's high-stakes accountability tests. Vogler (2008) reported that 61.9% of Mississippi's respondents spent more than two months preparing students for high-stakes accountability examinations compared to Tennessee's 14.1%.

### Theoretical Framework

Researchers began analyzing the relationship between stress and high-stakes testing in the early seventies. However, the term teacher stress was first introduced in the early 1970s (Kyriacou, 2001). Hans Selye published a landmark study in 1950 and it stated that stress was a part of life (Gabriel, 2010). Since then, suggested research has led to associating teacher stress with teacher self-efficacy.



Bandura (1998) defined self-efficacy as the belief that a person had about their own capabilities to produce a desired result in performance levels. Self-efficacy determined how a person thinks cognitively, feels, and self-motivation. A teacher with high self-efficacy could take control of task and successfully engage in the task. Teacher self-efficacy and cognitive competency influences determined the creativity a teacher exhibits in providing a learning environment conducive to learning (Bandura, 1997). The perception of the learning and development was affected by their belief of efficacy (p. 169).

Self-efficacy beliefs were initiated by diverse social and institutional practices (Bandura, 1997). Diverse educational institutions affected self-efficacy evaluations of children across cultures. There was a link between cultures and their expressions in different institutions. Universal performance was affected by self-efficacy. Theoretically, motivational beliefs were conveyed and understood in dissimilar settings that were influenced by one's culture (Klassen, Usher, & Bong, 2010).

As stated by Bandura (1998):

Teachers with a high sense of instructional efficacy operate on the belief that difficult students are teachable through extra effort and appropriate techniques and that they can enlist family supports and overcome negating community influences through effective teaching. In contrast, teachers who have a low sense of instructional efficacy believe there is little they can do if students are unmotivated and that the influence teachers can exert on students' intellectual development is severely limited by unsupportive or oppositional influences from the home and neighborhood environment. (p. 240)

Bandura (1994) agreed that perceived efficacy of high and low teachers on managing their classroom activities. Teachers with high self-efficacy managed their classrooms by devoting more time to student academic activities, providing guidance to students who were having difficulty, and offering praise for student accomplishments. Teachers with high self-efficacy created a positive learning experience for teachers. In contrast, teachers with low self-efficacy placed priority on non-academic issues, placed little effort on students who were not quick learners, and were highly critical of students. Teachers were empowered to take responsibility for decisions and choices that were based on the implications of the psychodynamic theory (Mintz, 2007).

Bandura (1997) stated that the need for people to control their own lives was evident in daily practices, rituals, and routines that were protected against the unknown. Increased knowledge provided people with the ability to predict the unknown and control the outcomes. Belief in the supernatural relinquished power to the unknown factors that shaped one's destiny. The constant need to be in control was found to be beneficial to the social and personal lives of people. People who were driven by making change and empowering others were often times judged and oppressed by others, even those who benefit from the change.

According to Schwarzer and Hallum, (2008), studying a person's personality educated one's belief in low and high self-efficacy. Research and theory further noted that self-efficacy had influenced a person's actions, feelings, and thinking. When examining a person's feelings, persons who experienced depression, anxiety, and lack confidence also had low self-efficacy. People who had low self-efficacy lacked confidence and concealed negative thoughts about themselves and their life achievements

(Schwarzer and Hallum, 2008). On the other hand, persons who experience a strong sense of proficiency and high performance in their cognitive process of thinking also have high self-efficacy. People who thought of themselves as quality decision maker, exhibited confidence, and felt a sense of competence and accomplishment, and experienced less stress (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). The stress syndrome was described by Selye as the process under which the body challenges stress (Gabriel, 2010).

According to Gabriel (2010), Selye's theory on the stress syndrome originally was the General Adaptation Syndrome (G.A.S) was described as the method used by the body to challenge toxic agents known as stress. Selye's belief in the naturalistic behavior to adapt to stress over time, the adjustment to harsh environments caused increasing level of stress adaptation, and stress eventually all led to physical illness and exhaustion, even death (Gabriel, 2010).

According to Gabriel (2010), Selye's study on stress from a social perspective was found that stress was caused by physical, mental, and environmental demands. Stressors caused the body to generate extra energy, which was not completely exhausted. The process of coping with stress, defined by the General Adaptation Syndrome (G.A.S.), occurred in three stages: (a) Alarm reaction is when the body is forewarned and activated, with peaked stress levels. During this stage, the body prepared itself for defense or resistance; (b) Stage of resistance is the body's defense attempt to adapt by starting with reduced stress levels and gradually increasing the levels of energy; (c) Stage of exhaustion is when the body's individual performance fails, causing illness (Gabriel, 2010). Social stress is perceived to be warranted by demands that were beyond the control of one who experience stress.

### High-Stakes Testing and Performance Assessment

According to Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender (2008), rigorous and relevant instruction was essential for helping students overcome barriers that include a student having low academic skills. Schools that were focused on curriculum and assessment gave students' access to options beyond second-schools. Performance assessment is based upon four assumptions that knowledge is constructed; task is worthwhile, better assessments improve teaching, and meeting criteria improves learning. The assumption that knowledge constructed was based on students who showed great interest and performed at higher levels seemed to organize facts around major concepts and then constructed their own understanding of the major concepts.

According to Burke & Ying (2010), teachers rarely used performance assessment portfolios as an assessment technique, partially the limited amount of time to create and implement. When teachers prepared performance task, they explained the task and standard that would be used to evaluate the performance. When teachers learned more about the learning progress and difficulties of the student, they made better decisions about content and instruction. Students who were active participants in their own learning tended to perform better when they knew what was expected of them and a set of criteria had been set. When students knew what goal they were working towards and understood their own performance, they performed better.

According to Lamb (2007), NCLB would cause low performing schools in Mississippi to resort to memorizing high-stakes tested items rather than increasing cognitive development for students in schools. The accountability systems mandates by NCLB have placed great pressure on schools assessment systems. The study revealed

that testing affected teaching instruction, sacrificing instructional activities by emphatically teaching to the test.

“Standard based reform developed from the idea that high expectations in academics will improve student effort and achievement by focusing the efforts of students, teachers, and schools and by providing an adequate measure of progress through performance base assessments” (Johnson, 2000, p. 261). The new standards in most states were intended for all students, not just those students who are academically capable, but those who had disabilities as well. It was intended that all students achieve high standards and demonstrate proficiency on performance-based assessments developed by the state. Traditionally, students with disabilities had been excluded from large-scale tests because accountability was not a major issue. However, with new laws, such as the No Child Left Behind Act, Title I, and the Individual with Disabilities Education Act, continuously excluded students with disabilities which directly opposed the federal legislation (Johnson, 2000). Now, laws contain provisions that all students should benefit from state reform activities.

A study was conducted in Maryland where the analysis of statewide score data was combined. “For practical, psychometric, and pedagogical reasons, strong interest exists in developing multiple-measure constructed-response items for use in large-scale performance test” (Goldberg & Roswell, 2001, p. 125) When developing multiple measured task items, task items yielded a response that was used to examine the evidence of what students knew and did in more than one discipline. According to Johnson (2000), there was little research literature on the impact of providing accommodations on large-scale performance assessments, therefore, several researchers have declared a need for

research to continue to answer questions about the validity of test results for students with variety of disabilities, using a variety of accommodations, in districts, state, and national assessments whose purpose is to describe the status of students' knowledge (Johnson, 2000).

According to the Mississippi Department of Education (2010), the goal of the office of student assessment is to effectively and efficiently implement all federally mandated assessment programs. In the state of Mississippi, accountability and assessment are linked to graduation. As part of No Child Left Behind, Mississippi students who plan to graduate with a diploma from the state of Mississippi and are enrolled in Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and/or U. S. must be assessed on designed framework competencies. The designed framework is targeted by the pass or fail of students who have taken the test(s). The results from the tests display the student's area(s) of strengths and weaknesses in Algebra I, Biology I, English, and U. S. History, in turn helping teachers to design instruction on competencies and/or state objectives. As a graduation requirement students enrolled in Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and U. S. History for the first time, must be administered an end- of course assessment in each subject area (Mississippi State Department of Education, 2010).

Performance level descriptors are used to rank students' performance levels in each content area. The performance level descriptors are advanced, proficient, basic, and minimal. The standard setting committee that is comprised of Mississippi educators decide what the cut off scores would be for passing/failing in each subject area. Student performance levels are based on the student's scale score that lies within a range that is set by the standards setting for each subject area. The performance level descriptors serve

as a guide to the development of the assessment and help establish cut off scores, throughout standard setting. Moreover, the performance level descriptors serve as a guide for teachers' instructional efforts to make certain that students attain the proficient level of performance on the standards (Mississippi State Department of Education, 2010).

### High-Stakes Testing in Education

“Historically, high-stakes testing has driven the way that educators deliver instruction. Historically, standardized testing has been in existence since the 1800s, but the impact of accountability was not recognized until the late 1970s” (Longo, 2010, p. 54). Since 1969, assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U. S. history, civics, geography, and the arts (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a). In recent years, standards for states assessments have been implemented to reach federal standard mandates of NCLB (Longo, 2010). The United States Department of Education directed states to modify educational programs to increase accountability in schools. Test-based accountability is present in almost every school in the U.S. (Hamilton & Stecher, 2004). Thus, educational accountability pushed states across the nation to evaluate educational programs for high school graduates, limited English language learners, and students mandated by state testing programs to take high-stakes tests.

According to Burke & Ying (2010), teacher respondents in the Mississippi Delta Area schools made expeditious educational reform in response to NCLB and the Mississippi Plan for Student Achievement: Assessment, Accreditation, and Accountability. High-stakes testing programs required higher performance standards and assessment systems. This study examined current assessment techniques that were used

to teach mathematics and reading. Teacher respondents used a variety of assessment techniques to prepare students for high-stakes tests.

According to Popham (2004), education reform attempted to reduce the achievement gap by administering standardized achievement test. Many U. S. educators had taken part in a game they could not win. When educators talked about achievement gaps, they really meant the difference in which racial and ethnic groups performed. The achievement between children from poor families and those from middleclass or well to do families were compared. Typically speaking, children from lower socioeconomic status tend to score lower on achievement test. Therefore, educators probably would have wanted to eliminate them altogether. Thus, the gap would be eliminated. Most educators associated achievement with learning. Achievements tests have been historically measured by what students have learned while they were in school. However, most people do not consider the fact that various groups may not have been taught equally. Assuming that what students have learned in school and what their achievement score are basically linked together is a mistake on behalf of most educators (Popham, 2004).

Educational accountability is monitored for all states and their high performing schools. Schools are “ranked among the state's highest performing schools as measured by their performance on state assessments or in the case of private schools, that score at the highest performance level on tests referenced by national norms in at least the most recent year tested” (U. S. Department of Education, 2010a, para. 1). Giambo (2010) used comparative results to show that the state of Florida’s high-stakes testing requirement for limited English proficient students models detrimental policies of high-stakes testing for



other states. The implication of the results of Florida's LEP policies can serve as an example for other states educators, policy makers, and legislators to work more towards the goal of NCLB (Giambo, 2010). Policies of high-stakes testing can be placed to benefit students who speak limited English (Giambo, 2010). The state of Texas, the leading state NCLB accountability system, has been shown to be inconsistent with high-stakes testing policies.

The revolving changes in education have led leaders to intensify pressure on the school districts, school principals, and teachers to conform to a one-size-fits-all, high-stakes testing system. However, some reports parents, educators and community members believe that more harm than good comes from state mandated standardized testing; a system in which test scores can deny students graduation from high school, particularly during this era of standard-based accountability testing.

Some states administer weekly, quarterly, and semester assessment. The frequent administration of tests increases the stress of teachers. In the state of Ohio, studies showed that teacher stress increased due to weekly short cycled assessment (Brackenhoff, 2009). Research explored environmental high-stakes testing experiences of teachers in North Carolina public schools and found that public schools in North Carolina encouraged change in teacher education programs at local universities.

#### Self-Efficacy

According to Speilman & Lloyd (2004), the results from the study indicate experience impacts beliefs about textbooks, teaching, and learning. With or without instructions from the instructor, the nature of prospective teachers causes them to respond with instructional authority. Math courses play a significant role in shaping conceptions

of practice. The classroom setting has an impact on prospective teachers' learning with novel math curriculum. Curriculum materials impact prospective teachers' beliefs about math instruction. In the study, The Teaching Beliefs Instrument was used to examine students' backgrounds and beliefs about teaching, learning, and textbooks. Data was collected from two sections of a math course for one semester of prospective elementary teachers. The students were mainly females in the second year of a 5-year elementary education program (Speilman & Lloyd, 2004). According to Bates, Latham, & Kim (2011), a study examined pre-service teachers' mathematics self-efficacy and mathematics teaching efficacy and compared them to a teacher's ability to perform in mathematics. It was found that pre-service teachers' mathematics self-efficacy was positively correlated to their personal mathematics teaching efficacy and their performance in mathematics was related to their teaching mathematics efficacy and their mathematics self-efficacy.

### Job Stress

According to Gabriel (2010), stress was defined as a method that the human body used to challenge toxic stress agents. Real life psychological stress had been associated with the all-inclusive but not exclusive reactions of frustration, fear, and aggression, all of which could be reproduced during a testing situation. Although stress had progressively acquired a negative terminology, researchers agreed that certain amounts of stress were necessary in order to continue being productive. Humans required adequate stress to encourage them to achieve in a creative and effective way, but extreme stress could lead to a person feeling distressed and oppressed which could lead to death. Although stress had been difficult to define, its association with illness was evident (Gabriel, 2010).

According to Torres, Lawver, & Lambert (2009), teachers experienced job related stress. A study was conducted among secondary agriculture teachers and showed time related job tasks were found to have been one of the sources of high stress. A job stress survey was used in the study to survey secondary agriculture teachers in Missouri and North Carolina. It was found that the job stress experienced by secondary agriculture teachers were within the norm of the data. Job related tasks such as; paperwork and supervision were among the top job stressors (Torres, Lawver, & Lambert, 2009).

The American Institute of Stress (2010) reported that 40% of workers reported their jobs were very or extremely stressful and 25% viewed their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives. Many professions, including teaching, deal with stress (Gold, 2002). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and testing standards gave teachers an escape from the profession, due to increased job stress. According to Smith & Kovacs (2011), a survey of teachers reported that the initiation of NCLB decreased job satisfaction. Higher stress, increased work load, and limited time spent with the family were reported as cause for job dissatisfaction. Teacher stress caused by job stress increased as the job description changed to encompass more than just managing the classroom. A teacher's job description workload included, but was not excluded to, preparing students for difficulties with pupils and their parents, additional administrative work, high-stakes testing, and classroom noise (Schwerdtfeger, Konermann, & Schönhofen, 2008).

According to Klassen & Chiu (2010), managing classroom activities, grading papers, managing student behavior, preparing students for high-stakes test, performing minor school wide duties, attending meetings, attending conferences, parent and student concerns and multiple other duties associated with teaching were few among many job

stress factors that teachers experienced. Work load stress was associated with teacher job stress. Self-efficacy had been linked to job satisfactions which caused job stress (Klassen & Chiu 2011). Studies showed parents and students had negative reactions towards the imperfection of teacher and the negative reactions were related to teacher stress (Stoeber and Rennert, 2008).

According to Ledoux, & McHenry (2008), teachers across states encountered similar experiences, particularly experiences related to stress as it was related to accountability and testing. These experiences affected teacher job satisfaction. It was reported in low performing distressed schools that the stress to achieve on high-stakes test created educational pitfalls that caused difficulties for veteran teachers (Ledoux, & McHenry, 2008). Self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and job stress were reported to be related (Klassen & Chiu, 2010).

According to Mintz (2007), teaching as an occupation had become stressful and more demanding. High demands had caused teachers to routinely carry out the same actions day by day while teaching. Teacher stress was occupational and an unconscious process. Physically, stress caused increased heart rates, headaches, ulcers, and sleep deprivation (Hughes, 2004). The mental psyche unconsciously caused teachers to perform routine acts. Psychologically, stress caused depression, anxiety, confusion, and tension. The effect of stress carrying over into the classroom caused chaotic classroom structure and poor classroom management. Teachers who chose to experience the same behaviors, whether it was from the student or self-motivated, was able to control the outcome based on the need to experience change (Hughes, 2004).

According to Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis (2008), teacher stress had been known to be caused by a lack of effective classroom management techniques often times experience higher levels of stress. Teacher practices and student learning was related to teacher stress. Classroom management strategies were shown to be related to teacher stress and student behavior. Teacher performance that affected student achievement was associated with stress (Ding & Sherman, 2006). Making the decision to develop good classroom management techniques minimized the mental stress of teachers. The psychodynamic theory implication empowered teachers to take responsibility for decisions and choices (Mintz, 2007). These decisions and choices that teachers made were determined by teacher self-efficacy. High self-efficacy and low self-efficacy determined the level of stress a teacher experiences, often times related to the cognitive level of the teacher there by justifying stress levels and their causes. The stress levels were lower for teachers with high levels of self-efficacy and teachers who were over the age fifty.

Teachers who experienced high levels of stress portrayed high self-efficacy and teachers who experienced low levels of stress exemplified low self-efficacy. This is partly due to the cognitive level of the teacher, the subject area the teacher is required to teach, and whether or not the subject is a high-stakes tested subject area. Research shows that female educators experience higher levels of stress than male educators (Timms, Graham, & Caltabiano, 2006). Work related stress for teachers were more common among females of lower levels. Teachers have changed their teaching styles and practices due to testing. Changes in teaching practices stem from teachers questioning their own teaching ability the classroom created by the stress of low test scores. Teacher

job stress is associated with workload stress and classroom, particularly in female teaches.

Self-efficacy linked job satisfaction to job stress (Klassen & Chiu, 2011).

Although teachers feel the need to prepare students for tests, studies show that the level of stress and frustration that teachers feel during testing is common. Teacher job stress is associated with workload stress and classroom, particularly in female teaches. Self-efficacy linked job satisfaction to job stress (Klassen & Chiu, 2011). Teacher stress and tension are influenced with the awareness of accountability mandates that have caused teachers to compromise their idea on quality of teaching in order to raise students to the highest academic level (Aronson, 2007). Studies showed work related stress for females with 0 to 15 years of experience was higher than their male cohorts and females with 16 to 20 years of experience score higher levels of work related stress than their male cohorts. During the fifteenth year, males reported higher levels of work related stress (Timms, Graham, & Caltabiano, 2006). Studies showed work related stress for female teachers, reported higher levels of work related stress, exhaustion, and symptoms of depression (Bellingrath, Weigl, & Kudielka, 2009).

Teachers, as well as those who experience student teaching, experience stress and the pressure of teaching diverse students and students on different academic levels. According to a Rieg, Paquette, & Chen (2007), major stressors and concerns for pre-service and novice teachers addressed the needs for diverse learning as well as the pressure students experience from having to take a standardized test. Teachers and student teachers are concerned with student achievement and concerns.

However, little to no concentration placed multiple stressors could lead to chronic stress, leading to substantial chronic stress. Likewise, research has identified high rates of psychological, such as depression and burnout; and physical symptoms such as high blood pressure and heart diseases, among school teachers (Bandura, 1998). The psychological and physical symptom of stress affects the learning environment and interferes with the educational achievement goals (Bandura, 1998).

Another study concluded that teacher stress reflected by the principal stress and vice versa. This is called the ping pong reaction causing cross over strain in the work place. Levels of stress for people sharing the same environment are similar towards the beginning and it escalates once they experience strain. Teachers rated student behavior as the leading stress factor that causes occupational burnout. It was concluded that the occupational psychology of teacher burnout is related to psychological symptoms of teachers (Bauer et al., 2006).

Teacher stress has been known to be associated with administrative support, school climate, and morale. According to Maslow's (1999) hierarchy of needs, the need for teachers to feel supported must be satisfied before an increase student achievement can be apparent (Perks, 1999). Leadership practices influence the level of stress that teachers feel in preparing students for academic achievement and high-stakes testing.

The belief that leadership practices is related to school morale and student achievement is a phenomenon that intrigues educators. The lack of administrative support places stress on teachers who face adversity and state high-stakes testing. Educators and school leaders continuously evaluate effective leadership practices of principals as it relates to student achievement and school morale. According to Roby

(2009), the most frequent factors that affected teachers' contributions were apathy, morale, lack of purpose, and isolation from colleagues, all of which contributes to a teacher's level of stress.

Leadership exhibiting and modeling efficacy tend to migrate throughout the atmosphere of the school making the teaching experience for teachers positive and rewarding as well as influencing teacher efficacy. It was reported that several factors influenced the instructional practices of teachers apart from test-base accountability and underlined in the role of the administrator and school leaders. These included school scheduling, class size, the reallocation of staffing resources within schools non-assessed course, and increased job-related pressure (Wells et al., 2010).

A case study of educator's perceptions of the effects of high-stakes testing and accountability policies on high- and low-poverty middle schools in a Maryland school districts concluded that teachers' aptness to face challenges were more acceptable with appropriate and adequate administrative support (Wells et al., 2010). Studies showed that administrative support was perceived as the most significant predictor of teachers' job satisfaction across geographical locations and settings. Administrative support attributed to the teachers' intents of continuing in the field of teaching. The effects of teaching experience, apparent student behavior, and teachers' contentment with their salary as it relates to teachers' plan to stay in teaching are all centered on the perception of administrative support (Tickel, 2008).

The age of accountability and high-stakes testing has influenced school leaders to evaluate and improve practices that will create a positive school climate, increase teacher morale, and increase student achievement. Leadership practices are outlined in the



ISLLC Standards for school leaders. Increasing the knowledge of school leaders on promoting a school culture that is less stressful for teachers and students will positively influence student achievement on high-stakes tests.

According to Gold et al. (2010), stress negatively impacted teacher in the profession as it related to retention and recruitment. It was found that teachers were better able to deal with stress once they participated in a course on how to manage stress while managing several tasks at once. By providing stress management techniques, schools would be better able to reduce teacher stress and teacher burnout. Job stress, content and self-efficacy were found to be the cause of retention in pre-service teachers and practicing teachers (Klassen & Chiu, 2011). In a study conducted with by Yang, Ge, Hu, Chi, & Wang, (2009), male and female teachers, male stress and vitality was compared to female stress and vitality. It found that female teachers had the same mean as males for occupational stress and males scored significantly higher than females for physical health. The study used occupational stress as it relates to the quality of life to show that males and females both had the same mean stress but males scored higher for vitality and physical health.

In a study that compared male police officers' workplace stress and female police officers' workplace stress, it was reported that neither gender nor experience related to workplace stress. However, females reported having a higher in job satisfaction (Hassell, Archbold, & Stichman, 2011). In Taiwan, a study was conducted on male nurse burnout and stress. It was reported that job stress was the most significant factor that directly influenced burnout in males. It was confirmed that job stress was related to occupational

stress in the burnout of male nurses. Job stress in male nurses was reported as having a strong correlation with job burnout (Hsu, Chen, Yu, & Lou, 2010).

### Stress with High-Stakes Testing

Teachers experienced pressure with the mandates of high-stakes testing (Kruger, Wandle, & Struzziero 2007). According to Hunter (2010), the perception of stress factors attributed to high-stakes testing between rural and urban Virginian elementary schools were addressed in a study where the results reported that there was no difference in stress levels of teachers in grades with high-stakes testing as opposed to the stress levels of teachers in other grades. Administrators used the results from the study to obtain problems that teachers may or may not encounter while administering state-mandated tests. Some of the challenges that teachers encounter could lead to increased job stress for teachers. Results from the study were reported to be beneficial to individual schools and school districts. The results suggested focus areas that would help school and district officials improve education in the age of accountability (Hunter, 2010). It was suggested that schools and districts would be able to better prepare practicing teacher and novice on how to design and deliver instruction that would help increase student achievement. Displayed and assessable online accountability model of NCLB helped to decrease the level of stress for teachers (Hunter, 2010).

According to Al-Fudail & Mellar, (2008), teachers experienced stress that was not physical or behavioral, yet it was psychological. Teachers experienced psychological stress when using technology. Teacher self-efficacy predicated job stress and teacher burnout (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). According to a study, occupational stress

predicated psychological stress for students who were training to be teachers (Chaplain, 2008). Trainees experienced challenges that would cause teachers to face stress.

The United States Department of Education charged school districts across the nation to improve and increase academic achievement. A quality feeling the need to compromise is affected by high-stakes testing and accountability mandates, thereby influencing teacher stress (Aronson, 2007). According to Brackenhoff (2009), accountability and assessment was used to increase student academic achievement thereby increasing teacher stress. In the state of Ohio, studies showed that teacher stress increased due to short-cycled assessment. Teachers were partly responsible for making sure that students achieved standards that were designed to increase student academic achievement and promote student learning. With increased academic achievement, came the development of teaching strategies that suggested techniques that were used by teachers each day (Brackenhoff, 2009).

Factors that were associated with stress of teachers included high-stakes testing. Female teachers who administered high-stakes testing for lower grades experienced higher stress levels. Teachers, who were employed by schools that had not met annual yearly progress (AYP) and who viewed teaching as a professional investment, experienced high levels of stress (Brankenhoff, 2009).

The reading ability of students taking the Ohio Achievement Test was not measured accurately, according to (Brankenhoff, 2009). It was perceived by teachers that testing was over emphasized and the state-mandated test did not precisely assess a student's reading ability. Student achievement was influenced by students' attitudes,

teachers' own beliefs about state mandated tests, parental support, and student motivation.

Standardized testing caused teachers to leave the teaching profession. High-stakes testing received top priority since NCLB compelling teachers limit time spent on preparing students for vocational careers and post high school education, but instead they were bombarded with testing. Regular education teachers as well as inclusion teachers were overwhelmed with preparing and administering high-stakes tests. Inclusion teachers experienced exhaustion when they prepared and were concerned with students' academic abilities. Inclusion teachers were overwhelmed with monitoring student progress. Performance on end-of-course tests that were linked to the school's academic performance on high-stakes tests added to the experience of the inclusion teacher (Journell, 2010). The inclusion of non-tested, end-of-year courses places inclusion teachers in difficult and challenging situations. In inclusion classes, inclusion teachers are responsible for preparing students for success in a regular educational setting and for success on high-stakes.

Teachers in different subject areas have different views on high-stakes testing. Views are based on whether or not the subject area is a mandated state-tested area. Teacher responses to testing in mathematics were based on their reflection of assessment. In past years, NAEP showed that the United States achieved lower scores than neighboring countries in math and science. The need to decrease the stigma of the U. S. falling behind in math and science has pushed schools to improve in the area of math and science. The increased accountability in science has increased the explorations in science, thus placing increased stressed on teachers (Aronson, 2007).

According to Tickle (2008), perceived administrative support mediates the effect of teaching experience, perceived student behavior, and teachers' satisfaction with their salary relative to teachers' intentions of remaining in the field of teaching. It was concluded that by improving teachers' perceptions of administrative support, increasing teachers' job satisfaction, and decreasing attrition, public school districts would save millions of dollars yearly and funds should be re-directed to directly benefit the students (Tickle, 2008).

According to a study conducted in New Brunswick (Williams, 2006), higher achievement for all students was the mission of school reform. The implications of this study were used to advocate support for professional learning communities, as well as the Department of Education, in modeling principals (Williams, 2006).

School leaders played a vital role in the structuring of school climate. Ongoing feedback and information from school leaders effectively influenced the reactions of teachers. Enhanced and fostered intrinsic teacher motivation outlined teachers whose feelings were openly displayed in effective teacher performance (Somech, 2005). Emphasis on the importance of working conditions for teachers was underlined in school effectiveness. According to (Bush, 2008), school leaders were given improved status and explicit training in order to effectively compete with many parts of the world. The purpose for training was to insure that educators never lose sight of the most important focus which was to promote student learning. A variable of significance focused on leadership that did not divert from the need to sustain high-quality teachers and emphasize effective learning (Bush, 2008).

In the time of accountability (Peredia, 2009), principals were deemed to focus on student achievement for every academic level of a school. Teacher morale has influenced student achievement, along with the creation of a positive school environment. Some principals were faced with the challenge of students who were educationally and economically disadvantaged students. In spite of the obstacles, some principals have managed to overcome and have successfully created a positive learning environment for students. The examination of principals' practices lead to success and provided a greater understanding of how school principals' create successful learning and teaching environments (Peredia, 2009).

Schools across the world continue to face teacher attrition and high volumes of teacher turnover for various reasons. However, the most frequent cause of interrupted student learning has been due to teacher shortages is teacher job satisfaction. Research has shown that job satisfaction has been positively related to student achievement. No Child Left Behind required all teachers to be highly qualified. This requirement forced school districts to work closely with State Departments of Education to ensure that teachers that were hired were in compliance with NCLB.

Studies have shown that administrative support was perceived as the most significant predictor of teachers' job satisfaction across geographical locations and settings. Administrative support attributed to teachers' intents of continuing in the field of teaching. The effects of teaching experience, apparent student behavior, and teachers' contentment with their salary as it relates to teachers' plan to stay in teaching are all centered on the perception of administrative support (Tickel, 2008).

Studies have been conducted to help school districts and administrators that are seeking improvement (Sterbinsky et al., 2006), by improving expectation of students and teachers in the academic arena. Schools that had an increased number of low student achievement scores on tests that were state mandated tested areas benefited school reform programs. Teachers will learn how to increase the rigor in their day to day instruction (Sterbinsky et al., 2006). Students will learn how to exercise higher order thinking, lead instruction, and maintain writing skills that are need to achieve. Accountability begins with districts, teachers, schools, and parents. Studies have been designed to address the issues of school improvement and student achievement and have defined the impacts of Comprehensive School Reform models in geographical diverse locations (Sterbinsky et al., 2006).

#### No Stress with High-Stakes Testing

In the age of testing, research supports the association of teacher stress with high-stakes testing, job satisfaction, job stress, and self-efficacy. Teachers across the nation have expressed little to no stress with high-stakes testing. Teachers in a New York urban school experienced lower stress levels with standardized testing. Teachers administering the New York State second grade exam showed no difference in stress levels with grade level or school location is an influential factor. Teachers suffer from stress and burnout for various reasons. Much of the research shows that teacher stress is associated with job satisfaction and self-efficacy. However, research does not support the belief that teacher stress is associated with high-stakes testing. A teacher's personality, also associated with the characteristic of the teacher desire to be perfect, was found to be not related to the stress that teacher's experience, leading to teacher burnout (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). Teacher perfections are not related to the stress teachers experience from teacher burnout.

A study exploring teacher self-efficacy in learning about implemented technology program due to diverse demographical characteristics showed that teachers perceived the implementation as effective. The results from the study showed that technology courses, offered to teachers, increased their confidence and competence in using technology (Overbaugh & Lu, 2008).

A study was conducted with elementary and middle school teachers from Canada, Korea, and the United States discussing the cultural environment and teacher efficacy and their relationship to job stress. According to Klassen, Usher, & Bong (2010), studies show job stress for teachers were not related to job satisfaction for North American teachers. The structure of education in the U. S. was different than the educational structure of other country of Canada and Korea.

Although high-stakes testing caused stress for teachers, parents, and students, it had not been proven that high-stakes testing effectively improved student achievement. Teachers from China experienced stress due to many factors that were not related to education. Collective motivation influenced job satisfaction for teachers in diverse cultures. However, stress levels were lower for teachers with high levels of self-efficacy and teachers who were over the age of 50. Although much of research showed that teacher stress was associated with job satisfaction and self-efficacy, research showed in the age of accountability and testing found that there was no relationship between stress and high-stakes testing.

Teachers experience multiple stressors through the course of a day. For example, preparing students for difficulties with pupils and their parents, additional administrative work, high-stakes testing, and classroom noise (Schwerdtfeger, Konermann, &



Schönhofen, 2008). As the rate of accountability increased, the ongoing experience of multiple stressors increased and influenced the level of stress that teachers experienced over a period of time. Research favored and disputed the association of teacher stress with high-stakes testing. Teachers who did not experience stress with high-stakes testing practiced preventative measures and techniques to reduce teacher stress. Self-efficacy was found to be the leading factor in reducing psychological strain on teachers (Schwerdtfeger, Konermann, & Schönhofen, 2008). The reduction of stress was predicated by increased self-efficacy. Taking control of professional work choices empowered teachers to decrease the stress and the effect of stress. Educating teachers on their evaluation of classroom stressors acted as an antidote against teacher stress and teacher burnout (Mintz, 2007). Botwinick (2004) suggested setting realistic goals, physical activity, seeking gratification beyond teaching, increasing the humor and changing the focus of your profession to deal with job stress.

Stress management for teachers reduced the stress that teachers experience by identifying stressors. Teachers can manage stress by acknowledging the stress, modifying the behavior that causes the stress and communicate the stress. Teachers can develop their physical state with exercise, strengthen their mental state with mental exercise, establish clear classroom instruction with creative methods of instruction, and control the work environment by prioritizing, and seek outside assistance from support groups (Mzrozek, 2002).

#### Novice Teachers

Research showed that novice teachers experienced little to no stress as related to high-stakes testing. However, novices have experienced frustration and challenges as it

relates to teaching. According to Kuster, Bain, Newton, & Milbrandt, (2010), novice teachers experience frustration with classroom management. It was reported that novice teachers did experience job stress. Many of the challenges that novice teachers experienced were lack of academic resources, instructional time interruptions, classroom and time management, and exhaustion. Meeting the expectation of the building administrator was another frustration and challenge for beginning teachers. Art teachers, in particular, experienced challenges with time management for accomplishing job duties (Kuster et al., 2010).

According to Torres, Lambert, & Lawver (2010), job stress is a concern for secondary educators. A study was conducted to describe the level of job stress that secondary agriculture teachers experience. The number of hours spent on the job was one of the top indicators. Novice teachers reported higher levels of stress than veteran teachers. Increased curriculum changes in agricultural education that focused on accountability and educational standards attributed to the some levels of stress of secondary veteran teachers. The role of secondary veteran teachers involved increased responsibilities in daily tasks. Agricultural education profession in Missouri and North Carolina examined and recognized the levels of job stress that veteran teachers experienced as a result of increased working hours. It was suggested that novice teachers use mentoring programs to reduce high levels of stress.

According to Bain and Mirel (2006), increased demands of improving test scores placed strain on veteran and novice teachers. Research indicated that teachers experienced high levels of stress while preparing students for required district tests. Females in particular experienced levels of stress as it related to job stress. Attention

placed on improving outcomes of students with disabilities caused increased stress on novice teachers (Boyer, 2005).

According to Boyer (2005), novice special educators experienced stress with providing creative and effective learning experiences for students with disabilities. Teachers experienced stress with achieving and organizing difficult medical procedures of special needs students, supporting special needs students with general education classes, and determining individualized student accommodations. Exhibiting knowledge of the legal aspects afforded to every student and supervising instruction was stated as other stress related issues of novice special educators (Boyer, 2005). Novice special educators experienced stressful challenges in insuring that their teaching practices are in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Schlichte et al., 2005). According to Ledoux & McHenry (2008), similar experiences related to stress were common among veteran teachers across states rather than novice teachers. In low performing schools, it was not reported that novice teachers experienced stress with high-stakes test.

### Summary

The summary of the literature that supports the study of stress that teachers encounter with high-stakes testing was explored in this chapter. The research shows evidence that teachers do experience stress for various reasons, with one reason being high-stakes testing preparation. However, there is very little literature on gender stress with high-stakes testing in secondary schools. Although many researchers claimed that accountability and testing has attributed to some of the job stress teachers experience, others claimed that teachers experience little to no stress as it relates to teaching high-

stakes test. Self-efficacy has been found to influence a teacher's perception of learning and the level of stress teachers experience with teaching. Researchers claimed that adoption of educational programs to help improve standardized testing and achievement has attributed to teacher job stress. It is evident that novice teachers do experience job stress that is related to high-stakes testing. This chapter presented literature on the following topics related to high-stakes testing and stress levels of secondary teachers: (a) theoretical framework; (b) high-stakes testing and performance assessment; (c) high-stakes testing in education; (d) job stress; (e) stress with high-stakes testing; (f) no stress with high-stakes testing; and (g) novice teachers.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This study sought to determine whether or not there are relationships between secondary high-stakes testing and the stress levels of teacher, self-efficacy of teachers, gender of teachers, and years of experience of teachers. In compliance with No Child Left Behind mandates, The Mississippi Subject Area Testing Programs designed end-of-course tests that required students to pass Algebra I, Biology, English II, and U. S. History subject area tests for graduation. The following questions served as a guide to the research:

1. Do teachers who teach high-stakes testing courses in secondary schools have more stress than teachers who do not teach high-stakes testing course in secondary schools?
2. Does self-efficacy affect the stress level teachers who teach high-stakes testing courses more than teachers who do not teach high-stakes testing courses?
3. Does the performance level of a school affect the stress level of teachers as it relates to high-stakes testing?
4. Does the number of years of experience affect the stress levels of secondary teachers as it relates to high-stakes testing?
5. Does gender affect the stress levels of secondary teachers as it relates to high-stakes testing?

### Research Design

This study was naturally descriptive and quantitative from the survey and demographics questionnaire submitted by teachers who have taught or who have taught subject area tests for coastal secondary schools. The study examined the stress and self-efficacy of secondary teachers as it related to school performance level, years of teaching experience that was categorized as novice or veteran, and gender in schools that were administered high-stakes tests. Based current research, this study compared the stress levels of high-stakes tested area teachers with the non high-stakes tested area teachers with the self-efficacy of high-stakes tested area teachers and the non high-stakes tested area teachers to determine whether or not a relationship existed. While the data that was collected was from teachers who taught in coastal secondary schools, observant analysis was made between schools based on the performance level. Demographical data was collected and analyzed to compare genders, years of experience, and school performance levels. The study sought to reveal possible relationships between high-stakes testing and self-efficacy as it relates to the stress of secondary teachers who are accountable for state-mandated tests.

### Participants

Participants for the study included Mississippi public coastal secondary school teachers who have administered the Mississippi Subject Area Testing Program system, also known as SATP 2. The SATP 2 consists of four academic end-of-course tests. The subject area tests that are tested annually include Algebra I, U. S. History, English II, and Biology I. Participants were employed by one of the six high schools on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The districts chosen were all coastal schools. The participants for this study

were teachers who are teaching or who have taught Mississippi's end-of-course state tests that are used to determine promotion or graduation for students, to calculate AYP for school and school districts, and to report tests results for the annual report card.

### Instrumentation

The instrument that was used for this study was The High-Stakes Testing and Self-Efficacy on Teacher Stress Survey, a 19-item questionnaire. The instrument measured the stress and self-efficacy levels of teachers in secondary schools. The survey was developed as a result of researching current literature on high-stakes testing, teacher stress, and self-efficacy. The instrument was reviewed for validity by a panel of experts that included a university professor, a principal, and a veteran teacher. The survey instrument was piloted by 15 participants from one school district recorded responses on a 5-point Likert scale (0= never; 1=almost never; 2= sometimes; 3= fairly often; and 4=very often) and rated each item as it related to stress, self-efficacy, and high-stakes testing. The instrument was tested for validity with Chronbach's alpha statistical analysis. The stress subscale was Q7, Q1, Q5, Q9, Q8, Q2, Q6, Q4, and Q3 with a chronbach alpha of 0.857. The self efficacy subscale was Q13, Q11, Q16, Q19, Q18, Q12, Q15, Q10, Q14, and Q17 with a chronbach alpha of 0.730. The respondents of the pilot study were not part of the final study (Christian, 2010).

### Procedures

A proposal was submitted to The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board for permission to proceed with the study. Once approved by the board to conduct the study, a letter was sent to the Superintendent of each school district, asking for permission to conduct the study. Once permission was granted, the researcher sent a

copy of the letter to each school's principal who participated in the study. Each of the participating schools was mailed a packet that consisted of a cover letter and surveys. The cover letter stated the purpose and anonymity of the study; and the contact information of the researcher. A designated person was assigned by the building principal to administer the questionnaires to the teacher, collect the questionnaire, and place surveys in the sealed envelope that was mailed by the researcher. Once the surveys were completed, the designated person from each school called or emailed the researcher to confirm completion and return of the surveys. The researcher collected and secured the surveys until all surveys were collected. Then the researcher used the survey results to test the following hypotheses:

- HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the stress level of teachers who teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools and the stress level of teachers who do not teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools.
- HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the self-efficacy of teachers who teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools and the self-efficacy of teachers who do not teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools.
- HO<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant difference in the stress levels of secondary teachers based on the performance level of their school.
- HO<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant difference between the stress levels of veteran teachers in secondary schools and the stress levels of novice teachers in secondary schools as it relates to high-stakes testing.



HO<sub>5</sub>: There is a significant difference between the stress levels of female teachers who teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools and the stress levels of male teachers who teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools.

### Data Analysis

Once the questionnaires were completed and collected, the researcher entered the data into the SPSS software program. The methodologist verified all data entered into SPSS. The data was retained once all of the data had been entered in the SPSS software program. The data was secured in a locked file cabinet at the researcher's home. After the data has been entered into the SPSS software and analyzed, the data will be discarded after six months. The researcher and the methodologist analyzed the data with the SPSS software program and documented the findings or results of survey questionnaires.

### Summary

Analyzing the methods that the researcher used for this study is detailed in this chapter. It provides understanding and the methodology for the research design, population, instrument, procedures, and data analysis. The findings of the study are presented in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS

The findings of the research study are presented in chapter four. This study was conducted by surveying secondary teachers from six coastal high schools. Thirty-five surveys were mailed to each school and 49% of the surveys were returned, representing the total number (N=104) of participants in this study.

A five-item demographic questionnaire was used to gather data about the respondents.

Table 1

*Frequency and Percentage Distribution for Teachers (N=104)*

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	26	25.0
Female	78	75.0
Age		
21-29	17	16.3
30-39	32	30.8
40-49	30	28.8
50-59	19	18.3

Table 1 (continued).

	Frequency	Percent
Subject		
Core or Tested Area	94	90.4
Non-core	6	5.8
Core, but not tested	4	3.8
Years of Experience		
0-5 years	33	31.7
6+	71	68.3
School Rating		
Successful	35	33.7
High Performing	47	45.2
Star	22	21.2

As reported by respondents, the number of males respondents was 26, representing 25% of the total (N=104) respondents, while the number of female respondents was 78, representing 75% of the total (N=104). The highest percentage of respondents were between the ages of 30 and 39 (30.8%) and the lowest percentage of respondents were over the age of 60 (5.8%). Data reported more than 50% of the teachers who responded were between the ages of 30 and 49. Teachers who were between the ages of 50-59 represented 18.3% of the total respondents.

As reported by respondents, 90.4% of the teachers were teachers who teach or have taught the core and tested area, representing. Data results reported less than 10% of the teachers taught non-core classes, elective classes, or core class that were not tested at grade level. According to survey data, teachers with six or more years of experience represented 68.7% of the total respondents and 31% of the teachers who responded had less than 6 years of teaching experience.

According to data results, schools that were rated high-performing represented the largest percent (45%) of teacher respondents. The number of respondents reporting successful school ratings was 35 (33.7%) and the number of respondents reporting star ratings was 22, representing smallest percent (21.2%) of the total teacher respondents. Schools, with ratings that were failing, at risk of failing, low performing, and academic watch, did not report. Table 1 contains detailed information for gender, age, subject, years of experience, and school rating by frequency and percent of total responses.

A questionnaire consisting of 19 items was used to measure how high-stakes tested area teachers felt about stress and self-efficacy and how non-high stakes tested area teachers felt about stress and self-efficacy. Teacher responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with 0=never, the lowest; 1=almost never; 2=sometimes; 3=never; 4=fairly often; and 5=very often, the highest.

Descriptive means and standard deviations were calculated for the responses of both high-stakes area teachers on self-efficacy and stress and non-high stakes area teachers on self-efficacy and stress.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics for Stress of Non-High Stakes Tested Area Teachers (N=104)*

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Q-7	I feel stress from my building principal to raise scores on high-stakes tests.	2.80	1.03
Q-9	My school's performance level does NOT affect the amount of stress I feel.	2.60	1.17
Q-1	When my students begin taking a state mandated test, I feel very nervous.	2.50	1.08
Q-2	Thinking about high-stakes testing keeps me up at night.	2.00	1.05
Q-6	I feel stress from parents to earn a passing score on state mandated tests.	1.60	0.52
Q-5	When it comes to preparing my students for high-stakes testing, I sometimes feel the bar is set so high, that I cannot ever reach it.	1.60	1.43
Q-8	At times I feel like quitting teaching because of high-stakes testing.	1.50	1.51

Table 2 (continued).

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Q-4	I sometimes feel like giving up when preparing my students for a high-stakes test.	1.10	1.20
Q-3	I sometimes feel like giving up trying when it is time to give students a high-stakes test.	0.90	1.29

Note. Scale: 0= Never, 1= Almost Never, 2= Sometimes, 3= Fairly Often, and 4= Very Often

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics for Stress of High Stakes Tested Area Teachers (N=104)*

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Q-1	When my students begin taking a state mandated test, I feel very nervous.	2.54	1.17
Q-7	I feel stress from my building principal to raise scores on high-stakes tests.	2.47	1.33
Q-9	My school's performance level does NOT affect the amount of stress I feel.	2.27	1.32
Q-2	Thinking about high-stakes testing keeps me up at night.	2.00	1.34

Table 3 (continued).

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q-5 When it comes to preparing my students for high-stakes testing, I sometimes feel the bar is set so high, that I cannot ever reach it.	1.50	1.22
Q-8 At times I feel like quitting teaching because of high-stakes testing.	1.48	1.55
Q-6 I feel stress from parents to earn a passing score on state mandated tests.	1.28	1.10
Q-4 I sometimes feel like giving up when preparing my students for a high-stakes test	0.78	1.13
Q-3 I sometimes feel like giving up trying when it is time to give students a high-stakes test.	0.74	1.04

Note. Scale: 0= Never, 1= Almost Never, 2= Sometimes, 3= Fairly Often, and 4= Very Often

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Self-Efficacy of Non-High Stakes Tested Area Teachers*

(N=104)

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q-19 I have experienced success in preparing my students for high-stakes tests.	3.50	0.53

Table 4 (continued).

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Q-18	With a concerted effort, I can get through to my most difficult students.	3.30	0.48
Q-13	My teaching experience has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher.	3.30	0.95
Q-17	An effective teacher may NOT reach my students.	3.10	0.88
Q-16	An effective teacher will reach my students.	3.10	0.74
Q-14	Teachers do NOT influence their students' achievement levels.	3.10	1.10
Q-15	There is a direct correlation between my effort and student achievement on high-stakes tests.	3.00	0.82
Q-12	My teacher-training program has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher.	2.90	0.99
Q-11	I feel a great sense of personal satisfaction about my job performance even though there is high-stakes testing at my school.	2.90	1.20
Q-10	My school's performance level does affect the amount of stress I feel.	1.50	1.18

Note. Scale: 0= Never, 1= Almost Never, 2= Sometimes, 3= Fairly Often, and 4= Very Often



Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics for Self-Efficacy of High Stakes Tested Area Teachers (N=104)*

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Q-13	My teaching experience has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher.	3.52	0.80
Q-11	I feel a great sense of personal satisfaction about my job performance even though there is high-stakes testing at my school.	3.28	0.82
Q-16	An effective teacher will reach my students.	3.26	0.92
Q-19	I have experienced success in preparing my students for high-stakes tests.	3.22	1.17
Q-15	There is a direct correlation between my effort and student achievement on high-stakes tests.	3.16	0.85
Q-18	With a concerted effort, I can get through to my most difficult students.	3.11	1.21
Q-14	Teachers do NOT influence their students' achievement levels.	3.02	1.21
Q-17	An effective teacher may NOT reach my students.	2.84	0.95

Note. Scale: 0= Never, 1= Almost Never, 2= Sometimes, 3= Fairly Often, and 4= Very Often

Table 5 (continued).

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Q-12	My teacher-training program has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher.	2.83	1.11
Q-10	My school's performance level does affect the amount of stress I feel.	2.24	1.32

Note. Scale: 0= Never, 1= Almost Never, 2= Sometimes, 3= Fairly Often, and 4= Very Often

After descriptive statistics were run, responses to questions pertaining to self-efficacy of high-stakes tested area teaches; stress of high-stakes tested area teachers; self-efficacy of non-high stakes tested area teachers; and stress of non-high stakes tested area teachers were all ranked by the mean score from highest (very often) to lowest (never).

The questions reported by the highest level of stress by non-high-stakes tested area teachers for stress included question 7, *I feel stress from my building principal to raise scores on high-stakes tests*, with a mean of 2.80 (Sometimes). The next highest level of stress for teacher in the non-high-stakes tested area was reported by question 9, *My school's performance level does not affect the amount of stress I feel*, with a mean of 2.60. The questions reported by the lowest level of stress by non-high-stakes tested area for teachers included question 3, *I sometimes feel like giving up trying when it is time to give students a high-stakes test*, with a mean of .90 (Never).

The questions reported by the highest level of stress by high-stakes tested area teachers included question 1, *When my students begin taking a state mandated test, I feel very nervous*, with a mean of 2.54 (Sometimes). The question with the second highest level of stress reported by high-stakes tested area teachers was question 7, *I feel stress from my building principal to raise scores on high-stakes testing*, with a mean of 2.54. The lowest level of stress reported by high-stakes tested area teachers was reported by question 3, *I sometimes feel like giving up trying when it is time to give students a high-stakes test*, with a mean of .74 (Never). Based on the Likert scale, both teachers of the non-high-stakes tested area and teachers of the high-stakes tested area are not feeling very stressed.

Self-efficacy of teachers in the non-high-stakes tested area reported the highest for question 19, *I have experienced success in preparing my students for high-stakes tests*, with a mean of 3.50 (Fairly often). Based on the data, questions on self-efficacy of teachers in the non-high-stakes tested area reporting the lowest mean included question 10, *My school's performance level does not affect the amount of stress I feel*, with a mean of 1.18 (Almost never).

Self-efficacy of teachers in the high-stakes tested area reported the highest level of self-efficacy on question 13, *My teaching experience has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teachers*, with a mean of 3.52 (Fairly often). The question reporting the lowest level of self-efficacy for high-stakes tested area teachers was question 10, *My school's performance level does affect the amount of stress I feel*, with a mean of 2.24 (Sometimes).

Although the stress for both the non high-stakes tested area teachers and the high-stakes tested area teachers was not very high, the self-efficacy of both the non high-stakes tested area teachers and the high-stakes tested area teachers was is high. The results indicated that teachers did not feel stress, but teachers felt very comfortable about teaching.

### Descriptive Findings

This study posed five research questions. Research questions 1 and 2 had corresponding research hypotheses, and t-tests were utilized to examine the relationship between stress level of the non-high-stakes tested area teachers and the high-stakes tested area teachers, and self-efficacy of the non-high-stakes tested area and the high-stakes tested area teachers.

Hypothesis 1 stated: There is a significant difference in the stress levels of teachers who teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools and the stress level of teachers who do not teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools. Teachers in the non high-stakes tested area had the highest mean of 1.84 with a standard deviation of .64, where  $N=104$ . Teachers in the high-stakes tested area had a mean of 1.67 with a standard deviation of .80. Hypothesis 1 was rejected because  $t(102)=-.659$ ,  $p=.512$ , therefore, no significant difference existed.

Hypothesis 2 stated: There is a significant difference in the self-efficacy of teachers who teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools and the self-efficacy of teachers who do not teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools. Teachers in the high-stakes tested area had the highest mean of 3.05 with a standard deviation of .48, with  $N=104$ . Teachers in the non-high-stakes tested area had a mean of 2.97 with a standard

deviation of .56. Hypothesis 2 was rejected because  $t(102)=-.482$ ,  $p=.630$ ; therefore, no significant difference existed.

Research question 3 had a corresponding research hypothesis, and Post Hoc tests and Oneway ANOVAs were utilized to examine the relationship between stress and school performance level. Hypothesis 3 stated: There is a difference between the stress levels of secondary teachers based on the performance level of their school as it relates to high-stakes testing. Teachers in high performing schools had the highest mean of 1.94 with a standard deviation of .78. Teachers in star schools had the lowest mean of 1.32 with a standard deviation of .67. Teachers in schools that were rated successful had a mean of 1.59 with a standard deviation of .75. Hypothesis 3 was accepted because  $F(2,101)=5.623$ ,  $p=.005$ , thus, a significant difference existed. By Tukey's post hoc analysis, the stress levels of teachers in high performing schools are greater than the stress levels of teachers in a star school.

Research question 4 had a corresponding hypothesis, and a t-test was used to examine the relationship stress and years of teaching experience. Hypothesis 4 stated: There is a significant difference between the stress levels of veteran teachers in secondary schools and the stress levels of novice teachers in secondary schools as it relates to high stakes testing. Teachers having 6 or more years of teaching experience had the highest mean of 1.69 with a standard deviation of .78. Teachers having 5 years or less of teaching experience had a mean of 1.69 with a standard deviation of .80. Hypothesis 4 was rejected because  $t(102)=.02$ ,  $p=.984$ , thus no significant difference existed.

Research question 5 had a corresponding hypothesis, and an independent sample t-test was utilized to examine the relationship between the stress levels of male stress

levels of females. Hypothesis 5 stated: There is a significant difference between the stress levels of female teachers who teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools and the stress levels of male teachers who teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools. Female teachers had the highest mean of 1.74 with a standard deviation of .78, while males had a mean score 1.54 with a standard deviation of .78. The Hypothesis was accepted because  $t(102)=2.169, p=.032$ , thus a significant difference existed. The stress level of female teachers is greater than the stress level of male teachers.

Although this study did not show a great significance in the relationship of stress and high-stakes testing on teachers, there were some teachers who expressed comments about testing, high-stakes tests, and stress.

1. "The pressure placed on teachers of high-stakes testing classes creates stress that interferes with the down times teachers need to be effective."
2. "All teachers in the same department should have to experience teaching state tested classes. I am very stressed to keep my scores high enough so I don't have to put on a plan of improvement."
3. "Everyone should share the stress of these state tests."
4. "High-stakes testing is absurd. It teaches the test only, not learning. It is for administrators."
5. "Teaching was much more fun and meaningful before testing accountability. Testing has taken the humanity out of the student-teacher relationship and reduced it to a game."
6. "There will always be emphasis on state tests as a benchmark for student achievement."

7. "My attitude influences some students' attitudes."
8. "Teaching for these tests is stressful because we do not have enough time to adequately cover the material."
9. "Teaching high-stakes test is very stressful."
10. "High-stakes test are unfair to ALL involved."
11. "I feel that class sizes should be smaller for state tested classes."
12. "High-stakes test hold people accountable. It would not be stressful if everyone did their job and taught the curriculum."

### Summary

Although the results from the study showed there was no significant difference in the stress levels of high-stakes tested area teachers and the stress levels of the non-high-stakes tested area teachers, the comments written by teachers clearly express there are some levels of stress for those teachers who are responsible for high-stakes tests. Some teachers felt that all teachers should experience high-stakes test so share the experience of the stress that teachers felt while preparing students for high-stakes test. Other teachers responded with some other stressful issues that involved high-stakes tests were the class sizes, not enough time to plan, and lack of peer job performance. One teacher commented: "It would not be stressful if everyone did their job and taught the curriculum," which affirms the requirement for Mississippi schools to use the designed test blueprints that assess framework competencies.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

Historically, standardize testing has led educators to evaluate instructional deliver. Standardized testing has in existence for many centuries (Longo, 2010). However, high-stakes testing has driven the way that educators deliver instruction. The impact of accountability of instruction has been a topic of research within the last 40 years. The belief that high-stakes testing and teacher stress is related has been the topic of research for numerous years. According to Torres et al. (2009), teachers do experience job related stress. Accountability and standardized testing attributes to teacher job stress. The era of accountability in educations has prompted states to use accreditation systems to assist school districts with self-improvement plans that can be used to monitor school accountability (Rothenstein, et al., 2009).

Standardized achievement tests have been used to monitor progress of students for over a century. The National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP) uses standardized testing to monitor and compare student progress across states. The underlying issues associated with high-stakes testing are questionable. According to Rothenstein, et al. (2009), several nations including the United States sought to use creative measures and methods to hold schools accountable. Test scores and developed school examinations are not the only measures that schools plan to use in determining whether or not a student's performance is satisfactory (Rothenstein, et al., 2009). According to Christian (2010), high-stakes testing did not significantly affect the stress



levels of teachers. School performance level, gender, and years of experience were not significantly related.

### Discussions

Accountability mandates required states to increase student achievement. Veteran and novice teachers are pressured to modify instruction, manage increased class sizes, and prepare students for high-stakes tests. The age of accountability in education has pushed states across the nation to a higher level of expectation. Although there is an expectation for districts and schools to improve test scores, school administrator and state leaders place little focus on the levels of stress teachers experience year to year. Yet, the outcome of test results have driven principals to the point of repeated placing highly qualified teachers who teach high-stakes tests in those same courses year after year, while other highly qualified teachers escape the experience and the stress of high-stakes tests. Administrators place pressure on teachers to increase student achievement due to accountability.

High-stakes test preparation share in the responsibility of novice teachers feeling high levels of stress. Teachers across states are encountering similar experiences, particularly stress due to accountability and testing. These experiences affect teacher job satisfaction, which can lead to teacher burnout, job dissatisfaction, high levels of stress, and low self-efficacy. The relationship of self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and stress, can be minimized through education (Klassen, Chiu, & Ming, 2010). Educating teachers on how to distinctly evaluate classroom stressors reduced stress for teachers and decreased teacher burnout (Mintz, 2007).

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between high-stakes tests and stress with secondary teachers. Furthermore, this study investigated whether veteran teachers experience more stress than novice teachers and whether or not self-efficacy, gender, accountability status, and years of experience influence teacher stress as it relates to high-stakes testing. This contributed to the existing literature that relates to teacher stress and high-stakes testing.

The study began with a review of the literature that related to the high-stakes testing and teacher stress. The review was compiled from several topics that provided support for the study. The topics that were used to support the finding included: (a) theoretical framework; (b) job stress; (c) stress and high-stakes testing; (d) high-stakes testing in education; (e) no stress with high-stakes testing; and (f) novice teachers.

The study was represented by a sample of the eleven secondary coastal schools and the sample included six high schools. The instrument used was The High-Stakes Testing and Self-Efficacy on Teacher Stress Survey, a 19-item questionnaire. Demographical questionnaire within the survey instrument was used to collect data as well.

Descriptive statistics were utilized to examine both high-stakes area teachers on self-efficacy and stress and non-high stakes area teachers on self-efficacy and stress. Moreover, t-tests were utilized to examine the relationship between stress level of the non high-stakes tested area teachers and the high-stakes tested area teachers, and self-efficacy of the non high-stakes tested area and the high-stakes tested area teachers. Furthermore, Post Hoc tests and Oneway ANOVAs were utilized to examine the relationship between stress and school performance level. Lastly, an independent sample t-test was used to

examine the relationship between stress and years of teaching experience, and the relationship between the stress levels of male teachers and the stress levels of female teachers.

In summary, this study posed five research questions and the research data analyses found:

1. Do teachers who teach high-stakes testing courses in secondary schools have more stress than teachers who do not teach high-stakes testing course in secondary schools?

Surprisingly, the analyses of the data found that there was no major difference in the stress levels of teachers of high-stakes tested courses and the non-high-stakes tested course.

2. Does self-efficacy affect a teacher's stress level as it relates to high-stakes testing than teachers?

Although the mean for teachers who taught high-stakes tests was higher, the results indicated that stress levels of teachers was not related to self-efficacy.

3. Does the performance level of a school affect the stress level of teachers as it relates to high-stakes testing?

Expectantly, it was found that the stress levels of teachers in high performing schools were greater than the stress levels of teachers in star school.

4. Does the number of years of experience affect the stress levels of secondary teachers as it relates to high-stakes testing?

Although the mean for veteran teachers was higher, it was found that years of experience did not influence the stress levels of secondary teachers.

5. Does gender affect the stress levels of secondary teachers as it relates to high-stakes testing?

The data supported Hypothesis 5 which stated that there would be a significant difference between the stress levels of female teachers who teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools and the stress levels of male teachers who teach high-stakes testing in secondary schools. According to the analyses of the data, it was found that the stress level of female teachers is greater than the stress level of male teachers.

Although there is a plethora of research about high-stakes testing and stress, the job related stress that teacher experience with high-stakes testing goes untold, particularly in low performing schools. However, while the data does not support the researcher's hypothesis, teacher comments do highlight the need for further research. The comments revealed issues of concern that could be addressed by school leaders.

#### Limitations

- The research population was limited to a small geographical location of the state and the number of schools in the geographical location. As a result, the sample size was limited to a small number of respondents with N=104.
- The number of participants was limited to particularly successful, high performing and star schools. The lack of participants from schools that were failing, at risk of failing, low performing, and academic watch schools may or may not have been attributed the stress of improving the status of the school's performance.
- The study was also limited to teachers who mainly taught courses that were high-stakes tested. Since the data did not show a high-level of teacher stress

as a result of high-stakes testing, there may or may not be attributed to the lack of concern for teachers who teach high-stakes courses.

- Limited respondents may or may not be the result of school leaders' lack of awareness or school leader lack of concern about the stress that teachers experience with state mandated tests. The study was limited to secondary teachers and does not represent the views of all teachers.
- The study was limited to the number of participant partially or impartially due to the voluntary completion of the survey.
- Participants for the study may or may not have been dissatisfied with the survey results.
- Participants may have distrusted the confidentiality of the survey, even though the researchers will clearly state that the questionnaire is voluntary and will be kept confidential.
- The number of novice participants may or may not have been limited due to budget cuts.
- The study was limited to high-stakes tested area teachers rather than non high-stakes tested teachers.
- Participants over the age of 60 teaching in high-stakes tested areas may or may not have been limited due to experience and tenure.
- With the stakes being high and the stakes been placed on accountability and testing, administrators may not have been confident with placing novice teachers in high-stakes tested areas due to lack of experience.

Although there is a plethora of research about high-stakes testing and stress, the job-related stress that teachers experience with high-stakes testing goes untold, particularly in low performing schools. However, while the data does not support the researcher's hypothesis, teacher comments do highlight the need for further research. The comments revealed issues of concern that could be addressed by school leaders.

#### Recommendations for Practice

The evidence from the research study supports the need for school leaders to address the stress that experience in high-stakes tested areas. Moreover, the results from research added to the current research literature on the need to address the issues of stress and high-stakes testing. Furthermore, the increased awareness of the issue helped schools suggest ways to help teachers move toward reducing teacher stress and increasing student achievement.

The findings enabled educators to explore ways to achieve the goal of reducing stress and improving academic achievement. With this in mind, school districts across the states should provide avenues and support to help teacher manage and reduce stress.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

It is suggested that further research be conducted on stress levels of school administrators and school districts as it relates to accountability and testing. Some school districts experience more stress than others. Therefore, the research should be conducted to compare school district that have a school performance level of failing, at risk of failing, low performing and academic watch. The limited number of male teachers teaching high-stakes tested courses should be a future study of interest. It is further suggested that school districts do a comparative study within the district on the

stress levels of elementary school teachers and secondary school teachers that are responsible for high-stakes tests, since both primary and secondary schools are held accountable for helping students improve test scores that are linked to promotion and graduation. Lastly, research should be conducted to give school leaders knowledge on the causes of stress and how to reduce stress for teachers who are responsible for high-stakes tests.

## APPENDIX A

## SUPERINTENDENTS' PERMISSION LETTER

August 9, 2011

Dear Superintendent:

My name is Sheneatha McDaniel and I am a doctoral student at the University of Southern Mississippi majoring in Educational Leadership. My dissertation is entitled "High-Stakes Testing and Its Relationship to Stress Levels of Coastal Secondary Teachers." I am seeking permission from you to allow your district's secondary teachers to participate in the study by completing a brief questionnaire.

With teacher accountability being a pressing issue, educators experience stress. Teachers often deal with many levels of stress while preparing students for Mississippi's Subject Area Test Programs. The purpose of this study is to learn more about the stress levels that teachers experience as they prepare students to take and pass Mississippi's Subject Area Test Programs.

The completed questionnaires will have full anonymity. All responses will be used for the study only and will be kept confidential with no respondent being identified individually. Participation for teachers is strictly voluntary and can be withdrawn from the study at any time without any penalty.

Please consider allowing your secondary teachers to participate in this study. If you have questions about this study or are interested in knowing the results, please contact me by phone: (228)324-5087 or by email at [msheneatha@bellsouth.net](mailto:msheneatha@bellsouth.net). My dissertation chair is Dr. Rose M. McNeese and she may be contacted by phone at (601)266-6276 or by email at [rose.mcneese@usm.edu](mailto:rose.mcneese@usm.edu).

Sincerely,

Sheneatha McDaniel

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601)266-6820



## APPENDIX B

## PRINCIPALS' PERMISSION LETTER

Dear Principal:

My name is Sheneatha McDaniel and I am a doctoral student at the University of Southern Mississippi majoring in Educational Leadership. My dissertation is entitled "High-Stakes Testing and Its Relationship to Stress Levels of Coastal Secondary Teachers." I am seeking permission from you to allow your district's secondary teachers to participate in the study by completing a brief questionnaire.

With teacher accountability being a pressing issue, educators experience stress. Teachers often deal with many levels of stress while preparing students for Mississippi's Subject Area Test Programs. The purpose of this study is to learn more about the stress levels that teachers experience as they prepare students to take and pass Mississippi's Subject Area Test Programs.

The completed questionnaires will have full anonymity. All responses will be used for the study only and will be kept confidential with no respondent being identified individually. Participation for teachers is strictly voluntary and can be withdrawn from the study at any time without any penalty.

Please consider allowing your secondary teachers to participate in this study. If you have questions about this study or are interested in knowing the results, please contact me by phone: (228)324-5087 or by email at [msheneatha@bellsouth.net](mailto:msheneatha@bellsouth.net). My dissertation chair is Dr. Rose M. McNeese and she may be contacted by phone at (601)266-6276 or by email at [rose.mcneese@usm.edu](mailto:rose.mcneese@usm.edu).

Sincerely,

Sheneatha McDaniel

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601)266-6820

## APPENDIX C

## SURVEY COVER LETTER

Dear Colleague:

My name is Sheneatha McDaniel and I am a doctoral student at the University of Southern Mississippi majoring in Educational Leadership. My dissertation is entitled “High-Stakes Testing and Its Relationship to Stress Levels of Coastal Secondary Teachers.” I am seeking permission from you to allow your district’s secondary teachers to participate in the study by completing a brief questionnaire.

With teacher accountability being a pressing issue, educators experience stress. Teachers often deal with many levels of stress while preparing students for Mississippi’s Subject Area Test Programs. The purpose of this study is to learn more about the stress levels that teachers experience as they prepare students to take and pass Mississippi’s Subject Area Test Programs.

The completed questionnaires will have full anonymity. All responses will be used for the study only and will be kept confidential with no respondent being identified individually. Participation for teachers is strictly voluntary and can be withdrawn from the study at any time without any penalty.

Please consider allowing your secondary teachers to participate in this study. If you have questions about this study or are interested in knowing the results, please contact me by phone: (228)324-5087 or by email at [msheneatha@bellsouth.net](mailto:msheneatha@bellsouth.net). My dissertation chair is Dr. Rose M. McNeese and she may be contacted by phone at (601)266-6276 or by email at [rose.mcneese@usm.edu](mailto:rose.mcneese@usm.edu).

Sincerely,

Sheneatha McDaniel

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601)266-6820

## APPENDIX D

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



## THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board

118 College Drive #5147  
 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001  
 Tel: 601.266.6820  
 Fax: 601.266.5509  
 www.usm.edu/irb

**HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE  
 NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 11032801

PROJECT TITLE: **High Stakes Testing and its Relationship to  
 Stress Levels fo Coastal Secondary Teachers**

PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 11/01/2010 to 12/31/2011

PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: **Sheneatha McDaniel**

COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Education & Psychology**

DEPARTMENT: **Educational Leadership**

FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**

HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approval**

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: **05/10/2011 to 05/09/2012**

Lawrence A. Hosman  
 Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.  
 HSPRC Chair

5-11-2011

Date

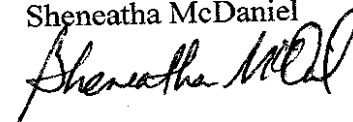
## APPENDIX E

## RESEARCH SURVEY INSTRUMENT APPROVAL LETTER

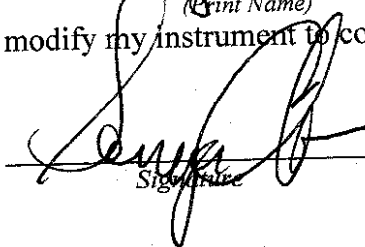
Dr. Sonya C. Christian,

I am Sheneatha McDaniel, a University of Southern Mississippi Graduate Student. I am currently conducting a study for my dissertation. I am writing to ask for your permission to use your research survey instrument for my study. Please sign below if you grant me permission to use your instrument. Thank you for your assistance and time.

Sheneatha McDaniel



I Sonya C. Christian, give Sheneatha McDaniel permission to use and/or  
(Print Name)  
modify my instrument to conduct her study.

 10-5-10  
Signature Date

**Please check the appropriate item.**

- [illegible]

<b>0=Never    1= Almost Never    2 = Sometimes    3 = Fairly Often    4 = Very Often</b>					
1. When my students begin taking a state mandated test, I feel very nervous.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
2. Thinking about high-stakes testing keeps me up at night.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
3. I sometimes feel like giving up trying when it is time to give students a high-stakes test.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
4. I sometimes feel like giving up when preparing my students for a high-stakes test.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
5. When it comes to preparing my students for high-stakes testing, I sometimes feel the bar is set so high, that I cannot ever reach it.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
6. I feel stress from parents to earn a passing score on state mandated tests.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
7. I feel stress from my building principal to raise scores on high-stakes tests.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
8. At times I feel like quitting teaching because of high-stakes testing.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
9. My school's performance level does <b>NOT</b> affect the amount of stress I feel.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
10. My school's performance level does affect the amount of stress I feel.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
11. I feel a great sense of personal satisfaction about my job performance even though there is high-stakes testing at my school.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
12. My teacher-training program has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
13. My teaching experience has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
14. Teachers do <b>NOT</b> influence their students' achievement levels.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
15. There is a direct correlation between my effort and student achievement on high-stakes tests.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
16. An effective teacher will reach my students.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
17. An effective teacher may <b>NOT</b> reach my students.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
18. With a concerted effort, I can get through to my most difficult students.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
19. I have experienced success in preparing my students for high-stakes tests.	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

### Comments

If you would like to offer any comments about the relationship between High-stakes testing, self-efficacy, and teacher stress, please write them in the space provided.

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